

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace paragraph [0009] with the following amended paragraph:

[0009] In one aspect, the present invention provides an apparatus and method for generating early status flags in a pipeline microprocessor. The apparatus includes early status flag generation logic that receives an instruction, an early result of the instruction, and a valid indicator indicating whether the early result is valid. In response, the early flag generation logic generates the early status flags. If the instruction is a status flag-modifying instruction, then the early status flags are stored in an early flags register. The early status flags register is invalidated if the early result from which the early flags are generated is invalid. The early status flags and associated valid indicator may be employed by subsequent conditional instructions for early execution to avoid delay in waiting for the architected status flag values to be generated by execution units later in the pipeline. The early status flags are updated (by copying the architected status flags thereto) and revalidated if all flags-modifying instructions in pipeline stages below the early flag generation logic, if any, have already updated the architected status flags. In another embodiment, the early status flags are updated (by copying the architected status flags thereto) and revalidated if the microprocessor pipeline is flushed.